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ABSTRACT

The first 3 years of a long-term program to build more effective collaboration between urban public universities and school districts are reviewed. The sponsor, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, focused on building more effective communication and working relationships between the university chief executive officer and school superintendents. University and school chief executives of five cities met to identify common issues and problems and to develop an action agenda to reduce transition problems of urban high school graduates as they enter college or the workforce. The university and school officials in the participating cities convened a joint task force of senior staff from both institutions to review current collaborative programs and to plan for joint activity. Private foundations supported the effort. Among the factors associated with improved collaboration were both commitment and support of the chief executive officers and designation of institutional staff resources for the collaboration. In addition to discussing the expansion of the program in 1984, brief descriptions are provided of initial collaborative activities in Detroit, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Boston, Birmingham, Kansas City, and Oakland. (SW)

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Urban University-Urban School Collaboration: Reviewing an Institution-Wide Approach

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This paper reviews the first three years of a long-term program by a national higher education association to build more effective collaboration between urban public universities and urban school districts. The program addresses a specific issue in such collaborative efforts -- the role of the university or school chief executive officer. As such, it is one of many approaches which can be and are being taken to build more effective university-school relationships in behalf of improving educational opportunity and quality for urban youth. For building strong, long-term collaboration and for placing such collaboration high on institutional agendas, we believe the leadership approach is an important model.

An Association Response to Urban University Concerns

The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) is composed of 146 of the nation's major land-grant and research-level state universities. Institutions hold membership in the association and are officially represented by their presidents and/or chancellors. To a major extent, therefore, the association functions as the professional organization for presidents and chancellors, and it is similar to a number of other associations in what is commonly known as "One Dupont" --

HE 018 146

associations such as the Association of American Universities (AAU), the American Association of State College and Universities (AASCU), and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC). Historically NASULGC has had a primary orientation to the interests and concerns of its land-grant, and therefore predominantly rural, member institutions. However, particularly within the past two decades, an increasing proportion of NASULGC members have been drawn from the nation's major metropolitan areas, institutions such as the City University of New York, Wayne State University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the University of Cincinnati, to name only a few. To respond to the increasingly urban orientation of its membership, NASULGC created a Division of Urban Affairs in 1980 to provide a focal point (and a staff member) for legislative and program activity of particular interest and relevance to urban public university administrators.

The Division of Urban Affairs initially concentrated its efforts on the 1980 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, one title of which (Title XI) authorized an Urban Grant University Program to provide federal assistance for joint city-university research and technical assistance projects. Although the effort to include Title XI in the reauthorized Act was successful, its timing in one sense could not have been worse. The Act was reauthorized in October 1980. One month later the Carter Administration was voted out of office, and the new Administration proposed major cuts in federal funding for higher education and proposed no funding for new programs such as Title XI. Efforts to support funding for Title XI in Congress have been similarly unsuccessful. The title remains authorized but unfunded to this day.

NASULGC Focus on the Urban School

Changed priorities in federal support for and interest in higher education (and in urban policy) forced the Division of Urban Affairs and its membership

to turn attention to the broader array of problems and opportunities facing all urban institutions in the 1980s. Led by members of its Executive Committee, the Division began in mid-1981 to pursue a series of efforts in strategic planning for urban universities, in building an understanding through seminars and small conferences of the implications of urban policy changes for urban universities, and in considering new ways in which urban universities could work with public school districts in their cities.

In part, therefore, the Division's interest in urban university/urban school collaboration arose out of its own internal need and that of its membership to refocus its energies in areas where a real impact might be made. In addition, however, the interest of the Division's leadership in working with urban schools was heightened by the increased national attention then beginning to be given to the nation's public schools and, especially, to high schools. The creation of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, the study then underway by Ernest Boyer and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the implementation of the College Board's Project Education EQuality, all were signals that the quality of American schooling was returning to the nation's agenda. And, as we have seen in the past three years, the cumulative effect of these efforts and the reports and publications which have resulted from them have engendered more national dialogue about the purposes and performance of our schools than at any time since the Soviets launched Sputnik a quarter century ago.

One consequence of the renewed attention to the condition of our schools has been a revival of interest within the higher education community in reexamining its role and responsibility for helping to improve the quality of public education, especially in the high school. This reexamination has taken many forms, ranging from attempts on the part of many state and other

universities to define with more precision the specific skills in language and mathematics expected of entering freshmen to intensive partnership programs between individual higher education institutions and individual high schools. Obviously, the Division's own interest in the issue has very much been a part of this revival. Its interest was heightened by the need to find an answer to a major question raised by the many projects and publications then underway: what effective means could be developed to ensure the long-term viability of university-school linkages, so that the current revival of educational reform would have a greater chance for long-term life and impact? Given the key role of the university chief executive officer in its own membership, the Division decided to look at what it could do to build more effective communication and working relationships between these university leaders and their urban school counterparts, the superintendents.

The Beginning of a Project: Glen Cove

In June 1981, the Division convened a small meeting at Glen Cove, New York, bringing together the heads of its major member institutions and school superintendents from their cities. The list of participants was determined in part by soliciting the members of The Council of the Great City Schools and the NIE Urban Superintendents' Group and the matching NASULGC member president or chancellor, with the stipulation that both the university and school chief executives would have to attend in order for a particular city to be represented. Ultimately, five cities were represented: New York, Detroit, Cincinnati, Milwaukee and Chicago. In addition, a small group of resource persons was assembled to provide ideas and direction to the meeting; it included Robert Wood, Frank Keppel and Michael Timpane. The meeting, which was supported with a small grant from the Ford Foundation, was exploratory; its purpose was to identify common issues and problems facing both sets of

institutions, and to see if a common agenda for action might emerge. After two days of intense discussion it became clear that, although each city faced its own set of distinct challenges, there was a set of concerns that cut across the cities and across the boundary lines separating secondary and postsecondary institutions. These concerns ranged from the political -- e.g. how to build strong support from local government and business leaders for the public education enterprise -- to the pedagogical -- e.g. how to develop better instructional techniques for reaching the underprepared student. A consensus emerged that an action agenda should focus on reducing the transition problems of urban young people moving out of high school into higher education or into the workplace.

The participants in the Glen Cove meeting agreed that they would continue the dialogue in their home cities. More specifically, they asked the NASULGC staff to seek additional Ford Foundation support to initiate collaborative planning activities in at least three cities, and to maintain communication links between the cities. In October, 1981, the Ford Foundation agreed to support the creation of a pilot effort in urban university-urban school collaboration, and shortly thereafter planning activities were initiated in Cincinnati, Detroit, and Milwaukee. In addition, Boston had been represented at the Glen Cove meeting by Ernest Lynton of the University of Massachusetts and Robert Schwartz, soon to become Director of the Boston Compact, a collaborative effort involving a number of Boston-area colleges and universities with the Boston Public Schools and the Boston business community. With the addition of Schwartz as consultant to the new NASULGC effort, Boston was also added as a participating city.

A Set of Shared Assumptions

Although the project took a different program focus in each of the initial

participating cities, project activities flowed from a shared set of assumptions. These were:

(1) Genuine inter-institutional collaboration requires the direct and continuing involvement of the chief executive officer of each institution.

(2) Collaboration works best when both partners proceed on the basis of enlightened self-interest, and urban universities perceive a direct stake in helping to improve the performance of urban schools.

(3) The higher education faculty and staff resources that can be most helpful to urban school systems are to be found all across the university, not just within schools or colleges of education.

(4) If collaborative projects are going to address the problems of urban youth who are not college-bound, they will require the active participation of governmental and business institutions as well as of urban universities.

Proceeding from these assumptions, the university head and school superintendent in each participating city convened a joint task force of senior staff from both institutions to review current collaborative programs and to develop a more carefully targeted plan for joint activity.

Initial Project Activity

More than the other cities in which the NASULGC project began, Detroit faced the virtual destruction of its industrial-based economy and the pressing need to build a new foundation for the city's social and economic survival. Urban university-urban school collaboration, therefore, initially focused on ways in which public education can contribute to building the new economic base

in conjunction with labor, business, and other public and private partners in the city. Efforts undertaken by Wayne State University and the Detroit Public Schools included development of educational programs which directly and indirectly can generate a new labor market for technology-based industries, particularly in the areas of allied health professions, computer sciences, and engineering. Programs were also developed to address the needs of gifted and talented students in the Detroit Public Schools. In addition, collaboration in Detroit included efforts to analyze the roles which public education can play in development of new "high-technology" small businesses on which the city hoped to build a basis for economic revitalization.

In Milwaukee, collaboration concentrated initially on a series of early intervention strategies for underprepared students, strategies which have been centered either on a targeted school or on a specific group of students. Reducing the gap between high school and college has been a major need in Milwaukee, and a series of efforts to provide high school students with greater familiarity about university requirements and opportunities, school-based efforts to improve the quality of classroom education, and efforts oriented to the needs of high school teachers, all have resulted from direct and continuous involvement by the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools.

Collaboration in Cincinnati took the form primarily of a reassessment of existing linkages between the University of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Public Schools. Much of the collaboration in previous years in Cincinnati had been non-academic and, in the view of the two chief executives, often inconsequential in nature. The expectation in Cincinnati was that collaboration would focus on developing more substantial long-term goals, with particular attention to developing a comprehensive research and development

agenda for the public schools to which university-based resources could be tied more effectively than was the case in the past.

In Boston, the project planning group from the outset included representation from city government and business organizations as well as school and university personnel, and took as its charge the responsibility for developing a new framework for the partnership programs that had existed between individual businesses and higher education institutions and each Boston high school. This framework, which is called the Boston Compact, is based upon a set of agreements between the Boston Public Schools and major external organizations, in which the school system commits itself to undertake specific internal reforms in exchange for an expanded commitment from the external organizations to assist the schools and their graduates. The first such agreement, which was negotiated in September, 1982 between the Boston School Committee and Boston's business leaders, resulted in the business community's commitment to provide full-time jobs for 400 graduating seniors in 1983, increasing to 1,000 graduates by 1985, in return for the school system's taking steps to insure the basic literacy and employability skills of those graduates. The second agreement, negotiated in the autumn of 1983 between the Boston School Committee and the city's colleges and universities, contains a joint strategy for improving the academic preparation of Boston students for higher education, as well as a shared commitment to increase the percentage of Boston graduates each year who continue their education at one of the participating institutions.

Wingspread: Expansion of the Project

As word of the project spread to other cities during 1982, a number of additional NASULGC member institutions asked to join. Based on this interest, the project moved ahead in two directions. First, the Johnson Foundation

joined NASULGC to sponsor a January 1983 Wingspread Conference during which the initial project sites described their first year work and in which representatives of several additional cities reiterated their desire to become a part of the NASULGC collaborative effort. Secondly, the Ford Foundation agreed to provide additional funding for a second year of the project, and four additional cities joined the project.

In Birmingham, collaborative efforts between the University of Alabama in Birmingham and the Birmingham Public Schools focused both on improvement by all high school students of performance levels in an array of intellectual skills, and on the building of a collaborative mechanism to increase city-wide advocacy for education as the high priority issue for the long-term revitalization and health of the Birmingham community. Effective private sector involvement has been a key goal, along with an understanding by all collaborating groups that genuine partnership efforts carry significant implications for changes in structure, function and goals by each partner, particularly the urban university.

In Kansas City, one major consequence of discussions between the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) and the Kansas City (Mo.) Public Schools was the assignment of the dean of the UMKC School of Education to work for one semester during the 1983-84 school year in the office of the Kansas City Superintendent of Schools. This assignment became a year-long appointment and, based on recommendations made in the dean's report to the superintendent at the end of that time, has led to the appointment of the dean as an associate superintendent for the current academic year. In addition, working groups of UMKC faculty and Kansas City school administrators have been organized to focus on a series of major problem areas, such as reading improvement, school leadership, and teaching effectiveness, which have been identified as targets

for school/university collaborative efforts through another outcome of the collaborative effort -- the establishment of a superintendents' roundtable which now involves thirteen metropolitan area school superintendents from both Missouri and Kansas. Application of programs developed by UMKC to improve college student retention to the problem of high school student retention and achievement is also being undertaken. Efforts are also underway to enlist the involvement of key business, labor, and local foundation leadership as integral components of school/university collaboration in the city.

Collaboration in Tampa focused initially on the improvement of math/science education, particularly through development of summer programs operated jointly by the University of South Florida and the Hillsborough County School District. In Oakland, the most recently added of the original project cities, collaboration was modeled after the Boston Compact through the establishment of the Oakland Alliance, a venture involving the Oakland Unified School District, University of California, Berkeley, Peralta Community College District, Oakland Mayor's Office, Oakland Chamber of Commerce (led by Kaiser Aluminum) and the Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute. Collaboration in Oakland has focused initially on improvement both of career-oriented and general education offerings in the Oakland schools.

A First Look at Outcomes: Progress and Problem Issues

The pilot phase of the NASULGC Urban University/Urban School Collaborative seems to have led to significant progress toward redefining and strengthening the relationship of urban universities and urban public school systems in several of the involved cities. Contacts and interaction existed before, but these were peripheral, involving small units of each system in an uncoordinated and fragmented fashion. The direct involvement of the chief executives moved the relationship to a different level of importance and visibility and is a

first step toward more coherent and systematic collaboration. It helped to improve and draw attention to public education issues and provided the groundwork for the development of local support for ongoing cooperation. The pilot effort was carried out with modest means, including grants totalling $34,200 from the Ford Foundation (much of which was re-granted to participating sites), and the contributed services of the NASULGC Urban Division staff, members of the Urban Division Executive Committee and individuals in the participating cities.

Progress was less clear in several other project cities, however. Following are some preliminary observations about the reasons for the varying progress which the city-based projects made during the first two years of the NASULGC program.

Commitment of the chief executive officers of the university and school district was a critical element <u>especially</u> where institutional staff resources were consistently designated and supported. However, where statements of commitment by the chief executives were not backed up by such support, the projects languished. In some cities, notably Milwaukee and Kansas City, the chief executives retained a considerable role in setting tone and policy for more effective collaboration; vice presidents/chancellors for academic affairs and their staffs were given day-to-day responsibility for university involvement, and assistant superintendents were given similar responsibilities in the school districts. Faculty from a variety of central academic departments, colleges and schools were brought early into collaborative programs with counterparts in city high schools. However, in a few cities, such as Cincinnati, responsibility for collaboration was never clearly housed either in the president's office, a vice president's office or in similar school district offices; personnel changed frequently and ideas and policy

statements by the chief executive officers could not effectively be translated into the wide range of program activity for which the NASULGC program had hoped. Given the relative newness of the NASULGC program, these cities also encountered problems in bridging the transition in several cases from old to new president and/or superintendent. With inevitable lag times in filling these vacancies, the project tended to be put on hold until the new leadership was in place and had undergone its own orientation to a new environment.

In two cases, Boston and Oakland, the city-based projects were staffed by a separate director either funded jointly by the university and school district or by other collaborating entities. In both cases, persons were selected who were familiar with and to the university presidents and school superintendents and who were skilled in approaching other external funding sources and the business community. Given the relatively significant progress which has been made thus far in these two cities, the model of a coordinator who may or may not be housed in a university or school district but who is funded by both institutions (and by other collaborating parties) and who has direct access to and frequent contact with the university and school chief executives seems at this point to be a promising approach.

Money seemed to make little difference in relative levels of achievement. The almost universal comment was that the grants of $2,500 available during the program's pilot phase were important not for the amount of support (which obviously was small) but for the connection provided to a nationally-based program active in a number of cities, associated with the name of a major foundation (Ford). The contact provided by the program between cities (particularly through the mechanism of a Wingspread Conference) was cited by a number of project sites as invaluable. Moreover, and particularly in the participating cities outside of the Northeast, the NASULGC/Ford connection was

an important selling point in attracting support from local foundations and, to some degree, the business community. In Kansas City and Birmingham, for example, local foundations provided many times the amount provided by the small NASULGC/Ford grant toward the collaborative effort; in Oakland, the Hewlett Foundation and Kaiser Aluminum were similarly attracted as initial and significant funding sources.

Most of the initial projects involved the college or school of education as an integral part of the collaborative effort. However, the NASULGC program was based in part on the assumption that successful long-range collaboration would not work without the involvement of the full range of university resources. The city-based projects which seemed to make the most progress during the pilot phase of the NASULGC program were indeed those which envisioned university-wide involvement in the collaboration with the school district.

A number of the projects were successful in attracting local foundation support. Efforts to build involvement by employers and the business community have met with mixed success. The Boston and Oakland projects have included youth employment as specific focus areas and goals; and, particularly in Boston, the business community has taken a visible and leading role in the collaborative effort. In a number of the other city-based projects, emphasis either began with or has gradually shifted to the high school-university transition, and the youth employment focus has yet to take coherent form in these cities. Involvement of the employer sector has been much less, therefore, and is an area in which the NASULGC program needs to give more attention in its continuing phase.

One underlying assumption in the NASULGC program has been that change in the university-school collaborative relationship would imply institutional change for both entities, not just for the school district. As with business

involvement, the evidence thus far on this issue is mixed. In a number of the city-based projects, both the university and school district have contributed significant cash and in-kind resources, particularly through assignment of staff to the project. In addition, as noted above, a number of faculty members from central academic departments and colleges have been involved in projects, as well as teachers and principals at the school level. Moreover, in Kansas City and Boston, university staff have been provided to the school district with virtually no strings attached. It remains an open question, however, as to whether or not the university personnel involved in the city-based projects will be rewarded for it with the central rewards available in the university (salary, retention, promotion and tenure), whether or not both university and school district will be able to develop flexible personnel policies to allow for joint school-university appointments, and the like. Some of the NASULGC projects (particularly Kansas City) are promising.

Project Expansion: 1984 and Beyond

Although the results of the pilot phase of the NASULGC urban university-urban school collaborative program were by no means uniform, they were in many cases promising. Therefore, NASULGC approached several funding sources to propose a significant expansion of its initial effort. Both the Ford Foundation and the Exxon Education Foundation responsed affirmatively, and early in 1984 NASULGC began a significant expansion of the collaborative program.

The expanded program is still very much coming into being. It involves several related activities: expansion of the number of city-based projects from the original eight to a new total of seventeen, through the provision of small planning grants to the new cities; development of a two-phase "deepening" grant program to provide more significant support to both original and new

cities in efforts to expand significantly and institutionalize the collaboration effort; offering a limited program of technical assistance consultants to assist local collaboratives facing specific problems and concerns; and support for information-sharing among the NASULGC program projects and between the NASULGC program and the growing number of collaborative efforts nation-wide. Selection of new participating cities, as well as recipients of "deepening" grants, is made through a formal application process with a small review board composed of one member of the NASULGC Division of Urban Affairs Executive Committee and two outside persons with significant university and school experience. (Selection of the original eight cities was made informally given the pilot nature of the program's first phase.)

To date, eight city-based projects have been added to the program: Albuquerque, Buffalo, Cleveland/Akron, Knoxville, Louisville, New York City, Providence, and Wichita. All focus on the development and/or reinforcement of collaboration at the top. Virtually all have from the outset identified specific problems or opportunities on which collaboration would initially focus; these include development of magnet schools, involvement of minority youth in programs for the gifted and talented, increased resource-sharing between university and school libraries, and development of joint programs to address vocational and educational needs of non-college-bound youth. But all have made clear their intent that the areas of initial focus would not turn into projects isolated from connection with development of larger goals and purposes for collaboration. In addition, the NASULGC program has emphasized to its new cities that seed funding is the most it can provide, that the significant funding for collaboration would have to be sought from local sources. It is important to note, therefore, that the successful applications

for inclusion in the NASULGC program, and many of those which were not successful, included evidence of significant support in hand or forthcoming.

In addition, four "deepening" grants have been made to date, to support expansion of collaboration in Boston, Kansas City, Milwaukee and Oakland. Grants of up to $15,000 were made to each city, with a requirement that these funds be matched on at least a two-to-one basis.

Need for Long-Term Evaluation

What the NASULGC program will need in the next two years will be a more rigorous evaluation of the progress made by each of its city-based projects toward genuine improvement in the quality of education for all youth in those cities, as well as genuine reformation of the way in which the university, school district and other entities in those cities work together in behalf of that improved education. NASULGC has been hopeful that its small program would help to initiate long-term change, and some degree of permanence, in university-school linkages in cities and in the improvement of education for all youth in urban school districts. The expectation of long-term change should indeed be that of all current efforts to improve public education, even though previous eras of school reform are littered with projects which flourished briefly and then disappeared with few of the long-lasting changes and outcomes which may have been intended.

We believe that the NASULGC project is one promising avenue toward instituting long-term change in urban education. A number of important questions remain to be answered, however:

--What is the evidence which NASULGC will have to produce during the next several years to show the effectiveness of a top-down approach to university-school collaboration?

--Which university-school collaborative efforts have the greatest prospects

for long-term success and institutionalization: those which start with "process" issues (structure and communication) or those which start with a specific task or problem area? The NASULGC program includes examples of both; many of the first cities in its effort began with "process", while a number of the newer cities are beginning with specific problems or projects around which long-term structure is intended to be built.

--To what degree are the universities and school districts changed internally by such collaboration, in such areas as reward systems for involved faculty and administrators, inclusion of collaborating entities in decision-making and resource allocation processes, and the like? Do approaches such as those taken in Boston and Oakland, in which a separate entity is created for development and management of the collaboration, deflect pressure for internal institutional change?

--Does the involvement of individual administrators, faculty members and teachers in university-school collaboration lead over time to a transformation of their roles within their institutions? In Kansas City, for example, the placement of the dean of the University of Missouri-Kansas City's College of Education as an assistant superintendent in the Kansas City (Mo.) School District, and the placement of the director of the university's director of the Center for Academic Development into the leading staff position for the Metropolitan Area Schools Project would suggest the possibility of permanent changes both in the university's administrative structure and in the perceptions and expectations by university administrators of their roles in relation to the city's entire educational system.